(b) The large number of Industrial Entrepreneurs' Memoranda filed for new steel projects and expansion of existing capacities is indicative of the interest shown by the private sector to invest in the steel industry. The State Governments of Orissa and Karnataka have proposed to implement integrated steel plants in the joint sector. Interest has also been shown by some private sector companies to set up large integrated steel plants. A number of sponge iron/-pig iron plants are under implementation in the private sector.

Ship Breaking Yards

3936. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) what is the policy of Government regarding scheme for setting up ship breaking yards in the country and details of ongoing schemes with their performance profile, State-wise, for the last five years;

(b) what are the schemes in operations during the Eighth Five Year Plan and expansion of schemes proposed on the Western coast of Maharashtra in partiuclar; and

(c) the details of steps taken/proposed to be taken to revive the working of ship breaking activities on Western coast of Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) The State Governments take up development of ship breaking yards in their respective States. Information is being collected from the concerned State Governments and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Duty on Import of Pig Iron

3937. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) how the average prices of Pig iron from indigenous resources compare with that of the imported pig iron, following the decontrol of pig iron;

(b) whether in order to narrow down the difference between the prices of imported raw material and the indigenous pig iron, government have considered the question of reducing the custom duty thereon;

(c) if so, what decision has since been taken in the matter; and

(d) what are the steps taken by Government to fulfil the requirement of Pig iron by different industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) In the month of November, 1992 the open market prices of pig iron inclusive of taxes were ranging between Rs. 5900 and Rs. 6700 per tonne. The landed cost of imported pig iron was about Rs. 7200 per tonne.

(b) to (d) In order to enable different industries to meet their requirements, pig iron has been made freely importable. Import duty on pig iron was also reduced from 55% to 35% *ad valorem* in January, 1992.

Government have also taken various steps to encourage production of pig iron in the private sector. These include exemption of the pig iron industry from the provisions of compulsory licensing, its identification as a high priority industry for foreign investment and dispensing with the price and distribution regulation of different iron and steel items including pig iron.

Modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant

3938. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants (India) Limited has been awarding contracts to private parties, ignoring the claims of public sector with